श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: महोदय, इस सुझाव पर मैं विचार करने के लिए तो जरूर तैयार हूं, लेकिन गलती यह रही है कि पिछले 50 सालों में किसी ने वैज्ञानिक तरीके से यह नहीं देखा कि केरसीन की मांग इस देश में क्या है, अलग-अलग आर्थिक वर्गों की मांग क्या है, हर वर्ग के लिए किस दाम को हम सही दाम कह सकते हैं और इस तरह से इन आर्थिक अवसरों का इस्तेमाल करते हुए यह जो डाइवर्ज़न होता है, उसको कम करने का भी प्रयास करें।

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: सर, इस पर डिस्कशन करा दीजिए। Sir, on Kerosene and LPG, there should be discussion in this House. Sir, a Calling Attention is with you on this subject...(*Interruptions*)...Sir, already a Calling Attention has been given ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, may I just say one thing? I would very greatly welcome a detailed discussion on both, kerosene and LPG because, we need the advice of the House in coming to a conclusion in respect of a policy...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सभापति: ठीक है, इस पर डिस्कशन करवा देंगे, अभी किसी सप्लीमेंट्री की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

Employees for ATR Operations

*84. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the funds for operation of ATR (Avion-de-Transport regional) flights were raised from the North Eastern States;

(b) the total strength of employees for ATR operations in North Eastern Region out of which how many are from North Eastern States; and

(c) whether Government propose to give more employment opportunities to the people from North Eastern Region in view of un-employment situation there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) No, Sir. However, North Eastern Council is providing Rs. 35.00 crores per annum for 5 years (Rs. 175.00 Crores) starting from 2002-03, to Alliance Air, for operation of ATR services to improve the air connectivity in the North Eastern Region.

(b) The total strength of employees of Alliance Air for ATR operations in North Eastern Region as on 1st November, 2005 was 188 out of which 14 employees are from North Eastern States.

(c) As far as Civil Aviation Sector is concerned the Government is promoting growth of aviation infrastructure and services in the North East which is expected to act as a catalyst in economic growth leading to employment generation. However, scheduled private operators have majority of their staff recruited from the North East Region of their operations in the region.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, I would be responding on behalf of my colleague, Shri Praful Patel.

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: सर, पटेल साहब कहां हैं? कहीं प्राइवेटाइज़ करने तो नहीं चले गए।

श्री सभापति: वे मुझसे अनुमति लेकर गए हैं।

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: नहीं, कहीं ऐसा तो नहीं है कि प्राइवेटाइज़ करने पहुंच गए हों।

श्री सभापति: वे अनुमति लेकर गए हैं।

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Sir, the North-Eastern Council is providing Rs. 35/- crores per annum for 5 years (Rs. 175/- crores) starting from 2002-03, for the Alliance Air, and a 50-seater flight is there. This flight is operating from Kolkata. Sir, Guwahati is the headquarter of an internation airport. So, why is this flight not operated from Guwahati? The position of the North-Eastern region in repsect of different sectors is very crucial, and if the flight remains operating from Kolkata, it would be very difficult. During the last Session also, I had raised this question that the headquarter of the flight should be in Guwahati, but it has not yet been finalised. This is my first supplementary.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, at present, for ATR, the flight is within the NER region, and also outside, from outside destinations. These 8 stations are: Agartala, Aizawl, Dimapur, Guwahati, Imphal, Lilabari, Shillong and Silchar. Also, there are connections between Kolkata-Shillong-Kolkata, Guwahati-Aizawl-Guwahati, Guwahati-Dimapur-Guhawati, Silchar-Agartala-Silchar. So, it is not that Alliance Air does not operate out of Guwahati. Other Airlines are also operating out of Guwahati. The North-East being an important part of the country, it is everybody's endeavour, particularly, the

Government, to develop this region, and for that purpose, various Airlines have been asked to operate out of the North-East and within the North-East.

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Sir, in the North-East, people are deprived of employment in the Alliance Air. Sir, the hon. Minister in part (b) of his answer has stated that the total strength of employees of Alliance Air for ATR operations in the North-Eastern region as on 1st November, 2005 was 188 out of which only 14 employees are from the North-Eastern States. Why is it so? It is because of the fact that the people from the North-Eastern region are not getting any chance in the Civil Aviation sector in the country. Why is this thing going on? Time and again, we have brought this matter to the notice of the Government, but the Government is not taking any action. Why is this discrimination? People are saying that the North-Eastern region is getting all the support, but in respect of employment in the Civil Aviation Sector, they are deprived of their share...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सभापति: बोलिए, बोलिए, मंत्री जी आप प्रश्न का जवाब दे दीजिए। भट्टाचार्य जी आप क्वेश्चन का जवाब सुन लीजिए। ...(*Interruptions*)...मंत्री महोदय, आप बोलिए और इनके प्रश्न का जवाब दीजिए।

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: In the Civil Aviation Sector, people of the North-Eastern region are not getting a chance in employment...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सभापति: ठीक है, ठीक है। Let him reply, please take your seat..(*Interruptions*)...आप जवाब देने दीजिए नहीं तो हवाई जहाज़ उड़ जाएगा।

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, let me answer and satisfy the hon. Member. He is somewhat correct, but not fully correct. Sir, the Alliance Air use the Indian Airlines facilities. All the ground handling facilities are that of Indian Airlines. There are 202 local employees of the Indian Airlines who are working in the North-East. It is not that only 89 employees of the Alliance Air are from the North-East.

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: In which departments are these 202 employees working?

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: They are working in ground handling and

other technical services. The Alliance Air has its maintenance base in Kolkata and that is why it gets its maintenance done in Kolkata. But all ground-handling employees of the Indian Airlines belong to the North-East. So, personnel from the North-East are working there. In addition to this, the Jet Airways have a total strength of 150 employees and out of that 150 employees, 99 employees are from the North-East. The Sahara Airlines have a total stength of 81 employees and all the 81 employees are from the North-East. The Kingfisher Airlines have 23 employees are from the North-East. It is not that there are no employees from the North-East.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, the Alliance Air flights are meant for the North-Eastern States, from one State capital to another State capital of the North-Eastern States. But these are operating from Kolkata and Guwahati. What about Shillong, Aizawl, Kohima, etc. The inter-State connections should maintained by the ATR. That was the purpose. But it is not being done. When will it be fully implemented?

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, there are inter-State connections within the North-East. There are flights like Guwahati-Aizawl-Guwahati, Guwahati-Dimapur-Guwahati and Silchar-Agartala-Silchar. These four ATRs, which are operating, are not only operating within the North-East...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, flights from Imphal to Agartala and from Agartala to Shillong are badly needed. There are no flights from Imphal to Agartala and from Agartala to Shillong.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, the introduction of flights within the States is based on various factors. The Government is always concerned about the well-being of the North-East and we will see what can be done.

DR. M.S. GILL: Sir, with your permission, I think the thrust of the question really is the neglect and indifferene towards the North-Eastern States by the Ministry in the sole business of promotion of civil aviation. The Minister has himself shown how sensible the Jet, Sahara and other private people are, because I think it is a little closer to the ground reali'y. They have their entire staff from the region, whereas he is getting some figures from the Alliance air and saying that we can add some more from the Indian Airlines. But the fact remains. Why don't you do more operations from Guwahati or from even farther away? You are using the money of the North-Eastern

Council to which all Governments, everyone, give money for the purpose of somehow developing the North-East. I think, the fundamental thing is—the real Minister of Civil Aviation is not here—that he should focus more on the North-East as he should focus more on Amritsar. But that is another story. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, it is incorrect to say...(*Interruptions*)... Dr. Gill is a senior Member of the House. He is an eminent person. He is saying that the North-East is really being neglected. It is not, in my opinion, justified. He must understand one thing that, as I said earlier, the Alliance Air has its maintenance base in Kolkata and as it uses all the ground-handling facilities of the Indian Airlines, local people are employed there. There are 202 local people, who are working in the North-East, from the North-East. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Kolkata is not North-East. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: This is wrong. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: I know that. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Kolkata is not North-East. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Please listen to me. I will reply to all you questions. There are 249 employees of the Indian Airlines who are working for the North-East. Out of these, 202 are locals. What more do you want?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. Question No. 85.

Insurance of farmers

*85. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. has, since its inception, insured 18 million farmers; and

(b) if so, whether the Varsha Bima Scheme is not getting any support from Government?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.